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Feminist Perspectives in The Novels of Manju Kapur

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Researcher

Ms. Ashwini Ganesh Devake

M.A. (English)

Research Supervisor

Dr. L.V. Padamarani Rao

Progressor and Head of Dept. English and Research Centre

Yeshwant Mahavidyalaya, Nanded (M.S) India.

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Introduction :

'Literature' is a term used to describe written or sometimes spoken material. The word 'literature' derived from Latin and its means the "writing formed with letters" literature represents the culture and tradition of the language or people. We can say literature is the mirror of society, and it is a great tool to teach the morality to a society. In order to understand a literary work, it is necessary to have an idea about the personality of the author. Literature tells us about the mental and moral characteristics of a nation. The work of literature appeals to the society because of its form of the various genres of literature like poetry, prose, drama. Fiction is, by definition, subjective. A novel, a story, drama or poem is the expression of an author's imagination. Fiction is mostly about telling stories and expressing feelings.

World's two great epics, the Ramayana, by Valmiki, and the Mahabharata by Maharishi Vyas, move around two central women character Sita and Draupadi. Sita and Draupadi as has been suggested are two poles of feminine experience in the world, Sita absorbed all inflicted misery and humiliation of the male ego whereas Draupadi challenges the male ego to the epitomic limits of human excellence. In the Vedic period, women were elevated to the status of devis. They were attuned into myths and legends. But today a contradictory state of affairs exists in India. Her status and roles need to be defined as per modern times.

The medieval period was considered the 'Dark Ages' for Indian women. Medieval India saw many foreign conquests; which resulted in the decline of women's status. The condition of women started to change when the social reformers, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Mahatma Jyotiba, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, started social reform. Indian English literature has begun with poetry in 1930s and The fiction of Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan and Raja Rao. They have raised the sociological, nationalistic, and philosophical issues. R.K.Narayan has presented active but unreliable, hard-hearted and selfish women in his Malgudi with contrast ineffective, foolish, incompetent, but successful men.

The feminist movement motivated to produce both feminist fiction and nonfiction and it helped in the creation of new interest in feminist writing. The prime objective of the feminist movement was that is started to change the destiny of women who have no rights freedom, no honor and no social importance in a such a social structure where the man are supreme. India is the traditional and male dominated country. The feminist movement has done a great job by helping women to come out of the slavery of patriarchal society. women novelists like Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Chitra Banarjee , Shobha De and many more have presented women's world and their lives and psychology on the context of a tradition, conversations and social changes. They have reflected truth of Indian reality.The status of modern India is a sort of paradox. On the one hand she is peak of leader of success and on the other hand she is mutually suffering the violence affiliated on her by her own family members.

The present research study intends to study of the fictional world of Indian modern women writer, Manju Kapur (b.1948) using her Six major novels written in post - colonial. This study employs the feminist perspective and depiction of feminine life condition in Manju kapur's novels. It proposes an in-depth exploration of selected Novels with an added, emphasis on her characters and their philosophy. The novels selected for this study are her first novel *Difficult Daughter* (1998), rewarded with the Common Wealth Prize for the best novel of Manju Kapur, the second novel, *A Married women* (2003), the third novel *Home* (2006), the fourth novel *The Immigrant* (2008) which was shortlistedof the DSC prize, the fifth novel the*Custody* (2011) and the sixth novel the *Brothers* (2016). The novels have been choosen carefully because they depicted the main issue of feminine perspective through characters.

Manju Kapur is one of the prominent modern Feminist women writer, who has significantly contributed to the Indian fiction. She is the writer who has written about women's problems faced by the male dominated world. She writes about middle class Indian women and her longing struggle for existence and identity. Manju Kapur's novels deal with the various women's role in patriarchal society. Kapur's protagonist and female characters fight social constraints, and they want freedom from self dependent and deny oppression. Kapur emerged as a New Women through her novels.

The Indian women Novelists have given, a portrayal of women from various angles. There are many Indian women Novelists like Arundhati Roy, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukharjee, Shoba De, Shashi Deshpande, Sudha Murthy and Manju Kapur, who present modern women who fight against suppression and oppression in the patriarchy. These novelists deal with the issues related to women dealing with domestic violence, education, health and carrier. They have very skillfully and effectively presented the

predicaments of women. But Manju Kapur is the one novelist who portrays the picture of the burning issues of the modern world, varying from lesbianism, infertility, divorce, adoption and infidelity etc.

The present study concentrates on Manju Kapur's novels that select the feminist approach for example, first novel of Kapur's *Difficult Daughter* (1998) is a story dealing with issues of women faced by male dominated society and denies oppression and fight against patriarchy. It is set at the time of partition. The title indicates that the strong women who tries to go against traditional norms and search for own existence, and identity. Kapur highlights ideas of women and their relationship with others, women sexuality, love, infatuation, jealousy, marriage and gender equality.

The Second novel *A Married women* (2003) brings out the frustration and adjustment of modern marriage. The third novel *Home* (2006) is a story of traditional joint family, and Kapur presents the painful journey of the protagonist, Nisha from Childhood into adulthood in search of self-identify.

The fourth novel *The Immigrant*(2008) deals with Nostalgia, Loneliness and Longing.Manju Kapur has two protagonists Shagun and Ishita who are in constant search for new space in their troubled life.Kapur's *Custody* deals with the study of distributed city life of two families due to marital disharmony, rigid court proceedings unwanted child custody, and justice. They are trying to live happy life with their respective husbands but could not sustain themselves for long, consequently, they get divorce from them and remarried with their men after a big struggle in their life. In the next novel of Manju Kapur's *Brother* (2006), she highlights the lives of women in multiple locations. Kapur shows situation of Tapti who undergoes sufferings because of the insecure, inferior nature of her husband.

Manju Kapur has generated almost all her female character with the same rebellious notions and creating her new space. Each novel of Manju Kapur examine the multidimensional womanhood as a mother, daughter, sister, friend, working women, business women, activist and social workers and many more. The present research study is completely based on the study of female characters from a feminist perspective.

The term 'feminism' originates from Latin word 'Famina' meaning 'woman' referring to the advocacy women rights and status at par with man on the grounds of equality of sexes. The term 'Feminism' became popular from the early 20th century and later from the social political movement for women's emancipation from patriarchal oppression. Feminism is the belief that all men and women should be treated equally in concerns of education, economic, and social matters. This movements fights for the rights of women, including for access of education, right to vote, to own property, equal rights within marriage, equal payment and to have maternity leave. Feminist ideology, directly and

indirectly has influenced the women writers in India. Indian fiction by women portrays the status of women in society and emphasizes women's psychological, cultural, social, and spiritual quest for identity. In the post independence era, the portrayal of women in their strength and capabilities and asking for their rights, and raising voice for their rights, because of the concept of Globalization and equality. Manju Kapur is the bold and courageous writer who artistically raises the issue of social , political and economical independence of women in the context of Indian society.

Objectives of the study :

The principal objectives of the study is to make an in death critical appraisal of Manju Kapur's six representative novels. The objectives of this study are noted down below :

- To scrutinize and analyze feminine perspective in the in modern times.
- To appraise the emancipation of women in patriarchy.
- To discuss different perspective of women predicament from the novels of Manju Kapur.
- To investigate patriarchal preconceived notion in the novels of Manju kapur.
- To acknowledge the multidimensional social roles and status of women in India.
- To notice and perceive female literature from the feminist approach through the novels of Manju Kapur

Hypothesis of the study :

A thorough critical interpretation of six representative novels by Manju Kapur by adopting a feminist perspective forms the core of this study.

- The select novels deal with the female issues, and gender bias and struggle for self identity and own right.
- Manju Kapur writes from the feminist perspective in her works.
- The select novels are full of 'oppression', 'quest for self', 'infertility' and 'Loneliness'
- The selects novels reveal the feminine sensibility and issues faced by women in the modern world.

Research Methodology and Tentative Chapter Scheme :

The research design, used in this study is exploratory, analytical and interpretive type. The procedure adopted in the content analysis and description is both intra-textual and inter-textual in nature. The present study aims to use the sociological, historical and feminist methodologies to analyze. The select primary data of the author has been taken up for the study.

Since, the topic is related to literature particularly to novels, it reflects the society, its members and tradition. The novels of Manju Kapurs are no exception to it. Discussion with the writer in the form of an interview will be incorporated in the thesis. The secondary sources like articles, research papers, journals, and critical books etc. will be referred to support the arguments. The present study is divided into six chapters, and planned according to the need on specified aspects as per below.

Chapter One : Introduction

The term 'feminism' originates from Latin word 'famina' meaning 'women' referring to the advocacy women rights and status at par with the man on the grounds of equality of sexes. The term 'Feminism' became popular from the early 20th century. The word 'Feminism' is a bundle of movements targated at defining equal opportunities for women employment in educational, political, economic social rights and equal employment. Feminism has a long political history and has its own origin. It is a movement that advocates for women. It is a socio-political movement, that purposes to create the political, social, economic, fairness between male and female. In 1919, women rebelled for the right to vote that first rebelled for the rebel paved theory, for the women's health and education, laws in 1920. As per the theory of feminism developed into in three phases in :

The first phase of feminism- It began in the late 19th and 20th century, in this phase women protested for political, right and property right.

The second phase of feminism- It began in the 1960's and 70's two phase pushed the way for legal and professional equality, anti-discrimination.

The Third phase of feminism- It began in the mid- 90s and pushed the way for social equality, disabilities classes and sexual orientation.

The concept of feminism generally deals with all genres having equal rights and opportunities. It is representing diverse women experiences, identities, knowledge, strength striving to empower all women to realise their full rights.The first chapter explains the overall design of the research study and the theory of feminism in detail.

Chapter Two : Manju kapur's bio- literary Profile.

Manju kapur is best known as a modern Indian Novelist. Her first novel *Difficult Daughter's* won the 1999 Common Wealth writer prize, for best first book Europe and South Asia. This chapter will cover Manju Kapur's biographical details like her educational background, her early and later life. The chapter also focuses on Manju Kapur as post-colonial, feminist writer, and her contribution for literature and how she intuitively perceives the position of women in a patriarchal society and various roles of women in male dominated world. The chapter also focuses on literature review on Manju Kapur's corpus of literature.

Chapter Three : Feminist perspective in the *Difficult Daughter* and *A Married women*

Manju kapur's first novel *Difficult Daughters* is a story of rebellious daughter who embraces education and career as an alternative to arranged marriage. It is a story dealing with patriarchy which denies women's voice of freedom. The title Indicates that a women who tries to go against traditional norms and search for own identity has to face tough times branded as *Difficult Daughter*. In *A Married Women* the story moves around the female character Astha, She was born and brought up in traditional patriarchal family. In this novel Manju Kapur presented Astha's struggles to search for her own identity through her skills but finally she leads a broken life.

Chapter Four : Feminist Perspective in *Home* and *Custody*

Manju Kapur's *Home* is a story of traditional joint family. Nisha is the main protagonist and grand daughter of Bawarilal. Nisha, suffers from physical harassment by her own cousin and she suffers from gender discrimination family. Kapur explains the route of complete equality, struggle for economic independence and her equality. In the *Custody* Manju Kapur raised the issues of Globalizations, liberalisation and drastically changing mode of society along with the desire of liberty of woman, infertility of woman and hollowness of modern marriage. Kapur has created almost all her women character with the same rebellious notions Manju Kapur creates new space for her characters specially for her female characters.

Chapter Five : Feminist Perspective in *The Immigrant* and *Brother*

Manju Kapur *The Immigrant* brings up the element of identity crisis in the context of migration. It is a story of two protagonists whose names are Nina and Ananda. *The Immigrant* discusses the Indian diaspora in Canada. It portraits young women who get entwined in the question of her identity and nationality. Nostalgia, loneliness and longing, are the main themes that are explored about Nina. *Brother* highlights the lives of women in multiple locations. Manju Kapur presents the traumatic situation of the protagonist who undergoes suffering because of patriarchal society.

Chapter Six : Conclusion

The final chapter of the thesis will summarize the central argument and give the research findings. Manju Kapur focused very realistically a picture of a new woman and psychological trauma faced by woman characters depicted in her novels. A planned wise view of Manju Kapur based on all novels published so far will also be included in support of the argumetnts.

Relevance of the study :

The present study deals with issues related to women in male dominated society. The present study would help to understand various causes of women's oppression. The present Study would also help to create awareness towards gender equality.

Significance of the study :

The present study deals with the predicament of women and female approach. Manju Kapur depicts the picture of Indian women who always are suppressed in male dominated society. Manju Kapur's protagonists fight against the suppression and oppression and deny Patriarchy. Her Characters offer new insights in the lives of women and help to bring out their identity and equality in the modern society.

Manju Kapur's writing focuses on new women and the psychological trauma faced by women characters is well depicted in her novels. Different researchers have studied her novels from various angles but there is need to examine and make a feminist perspective. Manju Kapurs gives voice to the women in traditional and patriarchal society and her works present the realistic problems in the life of Indian women.

Data, Scope and Limitations of the study :

The Primary and secondary data has been collected by using observation method. The present research covers following six novels of Manju Kapur that are publish till date

I. *Difficult Daughter* (1998)

II. *A Married Women* (2003)

III. *Home* (2006)

IV. *Custody* (2011)

V. *The Immigrant* (2008)

VI. *Brother* (2016)

There novels would be analyzed form the Feminist Perspective to understand the modern Indian Society.

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Researcher

(Ashwini G . Devake)

Research Supervisor

(Dr. L.V. Padamarani Rao)